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Official Records

21st plenary meeting
Monday, 8 October 2007, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ehouzou ..... (Benin)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Ehouzou (Benin), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 109 *(continued)*

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/62/1)

Mr. Rachkov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Belarusian delegation has carefully studied the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/62/1).

We have noticed the intention of the new Secretary-General to energize the work of the Organization in addressing international issues of current importance. The Secretary-General has tabled for consideration by Member States well-thought and balanced proposals aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the United Nations.

We also welcome the noticeable improvement of interaction between the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly, which contributes to extending cooperation between the Secretariat and the General Assembly.

The main conclusion that we can draw from this report is the need to concentrate the efforts and resources of the international community on achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We share the concern of the Secretary-General that a number of countries and regions are significantly behind in their campaign to achieve the development indicators.

No country in sub-Saharan Africa is receiving the promised resources in order to implement a national development strategy aimed at achieving the goals set forth in the Millennium Declaration. In view of the very pertinent remark made by the Secretary-General that this aid remains too unpredictable and too project-driven, we call upon the donors to fulfil their obligations. We join the appeal of the Secretary-General that every donor should provide recipient countries with timelines for increases in aid, so that those countries can properly plan their national budgets in a timely fashion.

We note the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General jointly with the Presidents of General Assembly at its sixty-first and sixty-second sessions to make the problem of climate change one of the key priorities for the Organization. We support the view that overcoming the consequences of climate change will contribute to achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. In this connection, the developing countries and countries with economies in transition should get assistance in solving the problem of obtaining sufficient energy in the face of the frenetic trading and demand for it.

As the Belarus delegation pointed out during the general debate, it is now up to the United Nations to work out practical arrangements for the transfer and distribution of technologies of alternative and renewable energy sources on a global scale. This is the major prerequisite for achieving the MDGs. Such practical measures should include the methods of dealing with the obvious problem of the concentration

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of these technologies in the hands of a rather small group of States. Otherwise, tomorrow, the pricing for these technologies will emulate today's exorbitant prices for traditional energy resources.

We have noticed a special interest of the Secretary-General to revitalize the question of the international disarmament agenda. The Belarus delegation fully supports the conclusion of the report that Member States should take the initial steps to overcome the deadlock that has characterized the major forums and instruments in recent years. Deadlock in disarmament matters has now entered a dangerous stage. Implementation of one of the most important treaties of today's world — the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons — poses the biggest concern. Instead of being a basis for partnership, the treaty has become the source of growing confrontation between developing and developed countries and between both nuclear-weapons-free and nuclear-weapon States.

The time has come for nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate their readiness to take results-oriented practical steps towards nuclear disarmament. Seeking a new balance between nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation obligations would help to create an environment conducive for progress in other disarmament areas, including conventional arms control.

As we mark the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 2008, there is the need to concentrate efforts on finding the ways to solve pressing, but not politically motivated human rights issues, on the basis of dialogue, not confrontation. This has been called upon in resolution 61/166, namely, the promotion of equitable and mutually respectful dialogue on human rights, adopted at the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. We would like to invite the Secretary-General to pay attention in his next report on the work of the Organization, to the very relevant aspect of the human rights issue, which, unfortunately, is not reflected in this report — human trafficking.

General Assembly resolution 61/180 on improving the coordination of efforts against trafficking in persons, called for the formation of a global partnership against trafficking of persons and other contemporary forms of slavery. This resolution requests that the Secretary-General create an inter-agency group on the coordination of the efforts between the institutions of the United Nations, Governments and the non-governmental sector in this field.

In our opinion, a United Nations plan or strategy on fighting human trafficking should be the next step in the creation of a global partnership. Let us determine the optimal format for this cooperation through the thematic debate of the General Assembly during the current session. We invite the Secretary-General to contribute to the organization of such debates and to participate in them.

In touching now upon one of the report's conclusions, we would like to emphasize that there is not only the need to fully implement previous resolutions on the revitalization of the General Assembly, but also to work out at this session of the Assembly the various measures aimed at restoring a balance of responsibility between the General Assembly and the Security Council as enshrined in the United Nations Charter. According to the United Nations Charter, the General Assembly must play an important part in making decisions on questions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Belarus delegation believes that it would no longer be acceptable to adopt a procedural resolution on revitalizing the role and authority of the General Assembly and strengthening its performance, on the order of resolution 61/292. The next General Assembly resolution on the revitalization of the body should be substantial, real and relevant to the needs. Our delegation will join those who will not allow the work on the revitalization of the General Assembly to be impeded in any way.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his report on the work of the United Nations, which gave an overview of the work of the Organization from all perspectives over the past year and of the current and future tasks and challenges facing the Organization. This is the first report submitted by Mr. Ban Ki-moon since he took office and it gives us a sense of his determination to build a stronger United Nations for a better world. Here, I would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks and appreciation to him for his diligent and outstanding work since he took office.

As the Secretary-General points out in his report, the Member States and the peoples of the world are asking the United Nations to do more, in more spheres of activity, in more locations and in more challenging circumstances than at any point in the Organization's history.

The world today is undergoing profound changes, bringing us unprecedented challenges and opportunities. In the face of mounting global threats and challenges, the international community has come to a consensus that we must seek solutions together and through multilateral cooperation via the United Nations. This has been confirmed, once again, by the general debate, which we have just concluded.

Universal development and common prosperity have been the aspiration of humankind. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally agreed development goals are the common framework we have set for ourselves. We are now about halfway to the deadline for these goals, however, we have yet to cover half of our journey. The world is faced with arduous tasks to achieve the MDGs by 2015, and Africa in particular faces tremendous challenges. It is essential for the United Nations to take action with a sense of urgency and without delay, especially to better meet the special needs of Africa. We appreciate the Secretary-General's initiative to set up the Millennium Development Goals Africa Steering Group. In the meantime, we support the establishment of specific mechanisms to objectively assess progress in both the developed and developing countries in honouring their respective commitments.

Climate change has become the challenge of our time that calls for urgent responses within the framework of the United Nations.

Climate change is an environmental issue. Ultimately, however, it is a development issue, because it is caused by the development process and can be addressed only through sustainable development in all countries. We welcome the success of the high-level event on climate change, convened by the Secretary-General, and we hope that the Bali conference slated for the end of this year will have a positive outcome. In addressing the problem of climate change, it is in all our interests to help developing countries improve their capacity to respond and to provide them with useful and affordable technology for clean development.

The United Nations plays an important role in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding. We support a greater role for the Organization in the maintenance of international peace and security, and we welcome the Secretariat's efforts to better position itself for challenges through renewal. The Secretary-General's further strengthening of the Organization's mediation support capacity can help the United Nations bring its unique advantages into play.

Nevertheless, integrated actions and rapid force expansion raise the bar with respect to planning, managing and providing logistical support to peacekeeping missions. We welcome the progress made in that regard by the Peacebuilding Commission over the past year. We hope that, during the next stage of its work, the Commission will bring tangible changes to the countries concerned, on the basis of respect for their sovereignty and their actual needs.

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, adopted last year, is a milestone document in the area of international cooperation against terrorism. It should be implemented as soon as possible so that our shared resolve to combat terrorism will be translated into capacity to do so.

The situation in the Middle East has represented the greatest test for the United Nations. Resolving that dispute through political negotiations and peaceful coexistence between the State of Israel and all Arab countries, including an independent Palestine, based on all relevant United Nations resolutions and the principle of land for peace, is the only viable way to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the problem. It is our hope that leadership on the part of Israel and Palestine will maintain the momentum for dialogue and that all parties will join together in preparing for a resumption of the peace process in the Middle East. The United Nations should play a greater role with regard to the Middle East question.

The crisis in Darfur, Sudan, also tests the solidarity of the international community. As the Secretary-General indicates in his report, that crisis has complicated and deep roots and requires efforts in the security, political, humanitarian, economic and social areas if a lasting solution is to be found. We look forward to positive results from the Tripoli negotiations, under the joint guidance of the United Nations and the African Union. We hope that all parties

will strive to create favourable conditions for such an outcome.

In addition, the future status of Kosovo is testing the wisdom of the international community. We hope that Serbia and Kosovo's provisional institutions of self-government will gradually expand the areas of their agreement through patient negotiations aimed at reaching a solution that is acceptable to both sides. In that regard, it is undesirable either to set deadlines or to impose anything from the outside.

The world is currently facing both challenges and opportunities in the area of security. Here, the United Nations should continue to work at the forefront by reactivating the multilateral arms-control and disarmament agenda and by improving the authority, effectiveness and universality of the international non-proliferation regime, particularly the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Addressing the proliferation issue through political and diplomatic means is the best option that is in our common interest. While we oppose all forms of nuclear-weapons proliferation, we believe that non-proliferation efforts must not be diverted from our goal of maintaining international peace and stability. The right of all countries to the peaceful use of nuclear energy should be respected and guaranteed if the relevant international obligations are honoured.

The United Nations must keep abreast of the times. Accordingly, it needs to take action to reform itself. If we are to make progress, we must build on the results already achieved, while seeking the broadest possible consensus through democratic consultations. We must follow up on all reform decisions taken at the 2005 World Summit, according priority to development reform, to which the United Nations must increase its contribution. China is prepared to work with all parties to ensure that the reform process becomes a process of consultative dialogue and solidarity.

Revitalization of the General Assembly and reform of the Security Council are important components of United Nations reform. We expect that, through reform, both bodies will enhance their role as the principal United Nations organs by increasing their efficiency and improving the division of labour between them. Greater priority should be accorded to the role of developing countries in both bodies.

The Human Rights Council has finalized its working methods and procedures, thus paving the way for its normal functioning. We hope that the General Assembly will support and endorse those results, which were difficult to achieve. It is only by working on the basis of mutual respect, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity that the Human Rights Council can play a constructive role in promoting international dialogue and cooperation in the area of human rights.

We support reform of the Secretariat to improve its efficiency and cost savings, to enhance internal oversight and accountability and to give the Secretary-General a broader mandate and greater flexibility. It is essential that we listen to the views of all sides so as to ensure guidance and monitoring by the United Nations membership.

Upholding multilateralism and promoting multilateral cooperation within the United Nations is not an option, but rather an imperative for all countries. We are prepared to work with all other countries throughout the world to build a strong United Nations and a harmonious world that enjoys lasting peace and shared prosperity.

Mrs. Aitimova (Kazakhstan): At the outset, I would like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization, which covers the multifaceted activities of all United Nations institutions.

Indeed, this has been one of the most challenging years in United Nations history. The Secretary-General and the Organization have taken bold and practical steps in several important areas, namely, security, peacekeeping, development, preventing climate change, promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue and institutional reforms. We are encouraged by the firm conviction of the Secretary-General that the United Nations must not shrink from the challenges and many pressing needs in the world today, and we are strongly convinced that they can best be addressed collectively, through the world's only truly universal instrument, the United Nations.

At the 2005 World Summit, all Governments committed themselves to implementing comprehensive national development strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is obvious that the MDGs can be achieved only through the active engagement of the entire international community and on the basis of partnership and cooperation. We fully

share the Secretary-General's opinion that we need to narrow the gap between aspiration and achievement, and we commend his firm decision to make the Goals a central priority for the Organization.

Kazakhstan is committed to its obligations to reach the MDGs and is steadily implementing a long-term development strategy called "Kazakhstan-2030". This year we celebrate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of an important document for our country, which determined the main direction of social and economic development of Kazakhstan for the long term. After 10 years of implementing the strategy, Kazakhstan has successfully completed the transfer stage and now is steadily entering into a new development stage. The Government's major task in economic policy consists in enabling the country to join the top 50 most competitive world economies within the coming decade.

The conservation of our planet's climate is a problem affecting the interests of all mankind and of every nation. We share the view of the Secretary-General that overcoming climate change will contribute to the achievement of the MDGs, in addition to the wider sustainable development goals agreed at the World Summit in 2005.

Kazakhstan is taking concrete measures to tackle environmental problems at the national and regional levels. We are working on establishing a Eurasia water centre — a major scientific and production association that would develop breakthrough technologies in water management and tackle the environmental problems of watersheds in the region. In addition, a solar centre for renewable resources and sources of energy — the first in Central Asia — is to be established.

Kazakhstan is fully aware of its share of responsibility for ensuring global energy balance and security. To promote further diversification of energy delivery to consumers and to provide assurances to energy producers, Kazakhstan proposes to adopt a Euro-Asian tax on the stability of energy delivery.

A global solution to climate change will require a global response, and we attach great importance to international discussions on a post-Kyoto regime. Kazakhstan welcomes and fully supports the process of negotiations that are to continue in Bali at the thirteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change later this year.

International peacekeeping operations under the auspices of the United Nations remain the most efficient tool for preventing and settling crises and ensuring global and regional stability. Kazakhstan firmly supports United Nations peacekeeping activities and efforts to strengthen the Organization's peacekeeping capacity.

With regard to Asia, we must mention the establishment of a continental arrangement for preventive diplomacy. It was made possible, thanks to an initiative of Kazakhstan, through the convening of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia (CICA), as proposed by the President of Kazakhstan during the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly in 1992. Today, the CICA process brings together 18 States and a number of observer States and international organizations. Time has proven the relevance of the CICA process, within which a political dialogue among Asian States is gaining momentum.

We also appreciate the establishment in Ashgabat of a United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, and express our readiness to closely cooperate with the Centre and our neighbours in order to strengthen regional capacities for conflict prevention.

The threat of terrorism to international peace, security and development remains a pressing issue for the international community. We support the efforts of the international community aimed at developing practical measures to strengthen security mechanisms and improve legal instruments to enhance coordination in anti-terrorism cooperation. Kazakhstan attaches great importance to establishing an international legal basis for an efficient and quick response to terror attacks and their timely prevention. To this end, we encourage the Secretary-General to take measures to facilitate the finalizing of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism as soon as possible.

Kazakhstan attaches importance to the strengthening of regional and subregional cooperation to combat terrorism and the role of regional organizations and forums to eliminate this threat. To this end, Kazakhstan highly appreciates the efforts of such international bodies as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, CICA and the Collective Security Treaty Organization, which make a significant contribution to

the actions of the international community aimed against international terrorism.

Kazakhstan shares the high expectations of the Secretary-General regarding the ability of the Conference on Disarmament to make a breakthrough in multilateral disarmament diplomacy, solving long-standing disagreements over its programme of work. We consider that preserving that forum is the responsibility of the entire international community. Kazakhstan is of the opinion that the conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty is essential for nuclear disarmament and the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We believe that the start of negotiations on such a treaty will be a significant step towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

History chose that man should make his first flight into space from the territory of Kazakhstan, and we are strongly convinced that space, as the common heritage of humankind, should be used only for peaceful purposes. Therefore, we support the initiative of the Russian Federation and China to elaborate a legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and on the threat or use of force against space objects.

We believe it is important to increase coordination and cooperation between United Nations bodies, other international organizations and Governments at the national level in order to prevent and overcome the consequences of natural disasters and to save many people's lives. In that regard, we attach particular importance to the establishment by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of a Central Asian disaster response coordination centre in Kazakhstan.

In general, the delegation of Kazakhstan welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization. However, given that the issue of gender mainstreaming and equality and the empowerment of women are gaining increased attention and importance in the international agenda, we would like to see more details, comprehensive information and analysis devoted to this issue in the future efforts of the Secretary-General.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that our eventual success in attaining our objectives in the field of security, development and human rights will be assured only through close coordination and support from all members of the international community. Kazakhstan will responsibly and actively participate in all major United Nations activities.

Mr. Kim Hyun Chong (Republic of Korea): Allow me to begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his first annual report, which provides a comprehensive overview of the Organization's achievements and its challenges and which points the way forward on the broad array of global issues that constitute the work of the United Nations.

Globalization is creating an increasingly complex web of interrelations that connects all people. That interconnectedness creates both risks and opportunities. As the world's sole universal organization, only the United Nations can muster the authority and legitimacy to tackle the most pressing challenges and embrace the broadest opportunities.

As the Secretary-General reminds us in his report, enhancing our ability to deliver results consistently and effectively will require the full commitment of our Member States, as well as reform and reorientation of the Organization. My delegation believes that the United Nations can do more and must do better. It must become more efficient and more effective, adapting to the changing circumstances of our times.

The Republic of Korea has long been an advocate of reforming the United Nations, which we see as an ongoing process. We are pleased that the Secretary-General has vigorously pursued the reform of this Organization since he took office. We fully support the Secretary-General's important initiatives to promote the efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of the Secretariat. His leadership by example in changing the working culture of the Secretariat is particularly appreciated, and we would like to see such change continue in the years to come.

As the Secretary-General reiterated in his report, the three pillars of the United Nations — peace and security, development and human rights — are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

In the area of peace and security, my delegation fully shares the Secretary-General's view on the importance of conflict prevention and post-conflict peacebuilding. We agree that there can be no development without peace and no peace without development. In operational terms, recognizing that interdependence means finding ways to cross parochial

boundaries at an institutional level. Today's most significant global challenges do not fit neatly into categories; in responding to them, the United Nations must find the flexibility to address their many facets comprehensively.

We see the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission as an essential achievement of the United Nations reform process and an exemplary step towards a more coherent integration of the work of the United Nations. It is no simple task to transform the fragile peace of post-conflict situations into durable peace, security and development. The Commission provides a much-needed instrument for coordinating the efforts of all parties involved in peacebuilding, and we are hopeful that it can play a meaningful role in preventing the re-emergence of conflict and in moving war-torn societies from uncertainty to prosperity.

Terrorism is another example of a challenge that requires a coordinated response from a variety of actors. The Republic of Korea strongly condemns terrorism in all its forms, and we remain fully committed to international efforts to combat it. We support the Secretary-General's effort to build capacity in that area and to bring together diverse elements within the United Nations system. We call upon the General Assembly to make every effort to reach an agreement on a comprehensive convention on international terrorism at an early date.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, is a challenge that must not go unanswered. Among the proliferation challenges facing the international community, the nuclear issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea requires our immediate attention. As the Secretary-General pointed out in his report, the Six-Party Talks have produced positive developments in 2007, taking important steps towards denuclearization. In particular, at the recent round of the Six-Party Talks, held in Beijing in September, an agreement was reached on the disabling of the three nuclear facilities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at Yongbyon by the end of this year.

We have also seen significant progress in inter-Korean relations. The historic summit meeting held in Pyongyang last week between President Roh Moo-hyun and Chairman Kim Jong Il culminated in the Declaration on the Advancement of South-North Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity, signed on 4 October 2007. That document lays the foundation for greater inter-Korean cooperation and peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia. The two leaders also agreed to further high-level discussions that will ease tension and build mutual trust, with the eventual goal of achieving permanent peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula.

The issue of development remains high on the agenda of the General Assembly. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have become the shared framework for development, agreed by our leaders in 2000 as a roadmap to a better world by 2015. The year 2007 marks the halfway point towards their delivery date. Notwithstanding the progress achieved in some areas of the world towards the MDGs, much more must be done in the area of implementation. It is essential that we assess the current situation and renew our commitment. We must use the year ahead to revitalize and redouble our efforts.

The Republic of Korea remains firmly committed to enhancing its official development assistance. By 2015, we will increase our official development assistance threefold from current levels. We have also joined the air ticket solidarity levy initiative, an innovative source of financing for development. At the same time, drawing lessons from our own history of development, we place emphasis not only on increasing the scale of our aid, but also on sharing our experience with developing countries.

An issue closely related to development is the daunting challenge of climate change. We welcome the new focus in this year's report on climate change, which must be urgently addressed by the international community. There is a growing consensus that climate change is placing serious constraints on worldwide development capacity. I hope that the political will shown by the leaders of more than 150 nations at the gathering on 24 September leads to the adoption of a roadmap to a post-2012 regime of realistic, tangible solutions to these pressing global concerns.

Turning to human rights, it is vital that the Human Rights Council live up to the high expectations that surrounded its creation. We must keep its working method flexible enough to enable the Council to make real progress in the promotion of human rights. As an inaugural member of the Council, the Republic of Korea is fully committed to human rights and to the

development of the Council into an important body for promoting them.

Before concluding, I would like to make a remark on Security Council reform. The Republic of Korea supports a reformed Security Council that is more representative, accountable, transparent and efficient. Given the enormous implications of Security Council reform for the future of the United Nations, my delegation has long held the view that any proposal on Council reform should garner the general agreement of well above the legally required two-thirds majority of the membership. To move towards such an agreement, my delegation believes that discussion should continue, building upon the progress made during the Assembly's sixty-first session.

The Secretary-General has taken the helm of this Organization at a time when the Member States and the peoples of the world are asking the United Nations to do more than at any point in the Organization's history. Our demands and expectations should be high, and we should give the Secretary-General the support and flexibility he needs to lead this Organization effectively in carrying out the mandates we set for it. The Republic of Korea remains fully committed to a strong, effective United Nations that can make our world safer, more secure, more prosperous and more peaceful.

Mr. Chávez (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): While we celebrate amazing technological advances, the globalization of economic forces and communications and the values of democracy and human rights, we also see that energy insecurity, climate change, growing inequality and poverty, armed conflict, genocide, humanitarian crises, cross-border crime and terrorism present a challenge to international security and are creating a changing and increasingly complex situation to which Member States and international organizations must adapt.

For that reason, in the discussion today of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, Peru reiterates its conviction that renewed and strengthened multilateralism does not just mean avoiding the scourge of war. We must also create an international alliance for development and social justice. We therefore call for a preservation of the goals and purposes of the United Nations and, at the same time, an adaptation of its instruments, mechanisms and means of action.

Member States should continue with our multilateral efforts to reform the United Nations with realistic expectations and in a spirit of compromise. Three reform processes in our Organization require a realistic and constructive harmonization of our positions if we want to be successful: system-wide coherence, the reform of the Secretariat and the reform of the Security Council. Those reforms must be concluded with satisfactory agreements that will strengthen United Nations bodies and the effectiveness of the decisions that they adopt.

There can be no peace and security without development, democracy and respect for human rights. The fight against poverty and inequality continues, therefore, to be the most pressing challenge in a growing number of States and for millions of human beings. In order to deal with it, international cooperation for development must strengthen the productive capacities of States to bring about inclusive productive policies, access to education and innovative technology and the strengthening of institutions and aid to vulnerable populations.

Unfortunately, the goal set for the developed countries of reserving 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product to fund development is only being met by a limited number of them. That is particularly worrisome because it moves us away from the Millennium Development Goals. The Organization and the international system must serve as catalysts for — and complement — national development endeavours, and must therefore provide adequate financing to that end.

As was agreed at the Millennium Summit, we must promote a world alliance for development. In that regard, we agreed on a financial and trade system that would be more open and based on foreseeable and non-discriminatory standards. By sharing the benefits of globalization, our countries will be able to ensure our populations' participation in the system's benefits, with specific improvements in their daily living conditions. That will enrich the concept of citizenship and will lead to the consolidation of democracy.

Our development and stability are being threatened by climate change and global warming caused by gases that are a product of human activity. For that reason, ecologically sustainable development must be promoted, with shared but differentiated responsibilities, which will be expressed through

binding multilateral agreements for all States on all aspects of this problem area, such as emissions reductions, funding and technology, among others.

On the other hand, the United Nations must generate national, regional and international capacities as much as possible, in order to deal with the growing degree and increasing frequency of the devastation wreaked by natural disasters. Humanitarian assistance demands have put to the test the ability of the United Nations to deal with those catastrophes, and the Organization's response has been remarkable. Peru, a country that is vulnerable to such disasters, encourages continued efforts to strengthen the mechanisms of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Central Emergency Fund.

Current international realities present us with many challenges to the global system for the promotion and protection of human rights and the respect of fundamental freedoms, at a time when millions of people live in such poverty that it endangers their basic rights, affecting their human dignity. The new Human Rights Council and its various components should therefore rise to those challenges and be effective, above all, in protecting human rights and, in particular, in responding to the complaints and statements of victims.

In order for our Organization to be more effective in maintaining peace and security, we must increase its capacity to prevent and resolve conflicts. In that regard, we must deepen our strategic alliance with various regional organizations and arrangements, as we have done with the European Union, the African Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of American States and the Arab League, among others. We would likewise encourage the Secretary-General to continue strengthening and using his capacity for mediation and his good offices.

The report before us today reminds us that conflicts continue to be a priority matter for our Organization. The establishment of peacekeeping operations, which are increasingly multidimensional and with more robust mandates, has required an administrative and operational adaptation of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. That is something that Peru has supported, with the conviction that the Organization must have at its disposal a multilateral rapid reaction force to be able to deal with emergencies with the urgency they require. Likewise, we must also remember that conflicts require, as a matter of priority, humanitarian assistance, which goes hand in hand with peacekeeping operations, ensures that human rights and international humanitarian law are respected and prevents impunity. Those are the mechanisms by which, in specific and effective ways, the United Nations can re-establish a peaceful situation and protect civilians. That is why we need to pay attention to the efficiency and adaptability of both of those instruments with regard to the multifaceted conflicts that threaten today's global peace and security.

Post-conflict management is also increasing in importance, and that effort must be led by the society and State concerned, with the support of international cooperation. In that respect, it is encouraging that the report describes the initial activities of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Fund and Support Office created for that purpose. We are sure that the work of the Commission will strengthen national and international coordination for reconstruction in the countries on its agenda.

Our Organization must also continue to be an area in which we promote cooperation against terrorism, the implementation of adequate legislation and a strengthening of police and intelligence capacities in that effort. It is also important that we continue to advance in the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and adopt a global convention against terrorism.

Peru also proposes that we breathe new life into the specialized bodies and forums in order to combat illicit drug trafficking. Shared responsibility in that area, particularly in the light of the cross-border nature of drug trafficking, means that we need alliances that are based on balanced political dialogue, so that international cooperation and action address every aspect of that cross-border phenomenon and are commensurate with the urgency and magnitude of the problem.

The United Nations and the specialized agencies must continue to deal with disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We must strengthen and expand the multilateral commitments undertaken in that area, in order to stop and reverse the threats and instability that are a product

of the resurgence of the arms race in various parts of the world.

We must also continue to strengthen multilateral action to deal with issues such as landmines and illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons, to support initiatives such as those relating to cluster bombs, and to continue strengthening the United Nations as the ideal forum for deepening our cooperation and establishing binding rules.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the international system must go beyond inter-State relationships and include non-governmental organizations, multinational and local companies, trade unions and other members of civil society. In the United Nations, we must keep all doors and windows open, so as to bring those actors on board as sources of information and experience and use their contributions in the preparation of our decisions and their implementation. The United Nations must take on a more inclusive form, in harmony with the increasingly globalized and interdependent world in which we must live.

Mr. Malmierca Díaz (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the delegation of Cuba, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the presentation of his annual report, the first of his mandate. As pointedly mentioned in the report, it comes at a time when the Member States and the peoples of the world are asking the United Nations to do more in more spheres of activity, in more locations and in more difficult circumstances than at any point in the history of the Organization. The world is going through a critical economic and social period, characterized by tension, an increase in hunger and poverty, a surge in armed conflicts, the degradation of the environment and the spread of diseases, such as AIDS, which threaten the very existence of several countries. The current gap between the rich and the poor has reached shameful levels.

Development must be a high priority on the agenda of the United Nations. Cuba welcomes the decision of the Secretary-General, which he reiterated in his report, to make the Millennium Development Goals one of the immediate priorities of his mandate. Seven years ago, the Millennium Declaration committed us to work towards very modest and inadequate goals. Despite that, today, halfway through the period allotted for meeting those goals, the undeniable reality is that we are not any closer to achieving the Goals or the decisions of the major United Nations conferences held during the last decade. Poverty has not decreased and inequality is increasing, both among countries and within them. If the current pace continues, the goal of reducing by half the number of hungry people in the world by 2015 will only be met in 2050, and even then, there will still be more than 400 million hungry people on the face of the earth.

What is so sad about all of this is that the world has the technological and human resources and capacity necessary to meet the Millennium Development Goals. The cancellation of foreign debt, which our countries have already paid several times over and which still continues to grow, will allow us to devote more than $400 billion to development. An additional $300 billion would be available if we were to eliminate the agricultural subsidies of developed countries, which caused the Doha Round in the World Trade Organization to fail.

If they fulfilled their commitment of devoting 0.7 of gross domestic product to official development assistance, instead of the barely 0.3 per cent they now provide, it would represent more than an additional $141 billion. With only 10 per cent of the trillion dollars that are used for military expenditures today, the Millennium Development Goals, for which only $150 billion are required, could be achieved.

Aside from being utterly unjust, the current international economic system is absolutely unsustainable. An economic system that destroys the environment cannot be sustained. Sixty per cent of the world's ecosystems are being degraded or used in an unsustainable manner. Massive consumer waste in industrialized countries jeopardizes the survival of the human race. Phenomena such as global warming, the danger of rising sea levels, the indiscriminate logging of forests, the attempt to use food as fuel to be squandered in American and European cars, the depletion of fossil fuels and the irrational use of water resources, among other things, pose dire threats to life. The Secretary-General is quite right to say in his report that climate change and the way that we address it will define our generation, our era and, ultimately, our legacy to the world. We must act, and act quickly, and the developed countries responsible for 76 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions have the moral obligation and the principle historical responsibility to do so. We have common yet differentiated responsibilities.

Today more than ever before, we need the United Nations. We uphold the need for both its existence and its in-depth reform and democratization. But that must be accomplished with full respect for its Charter and not by rewriting it or distorting its purposes or principles. The main challenge that we face is to reform the United Nations so that it serves the interests of all nations equally. We cannot allow the reform to founder and our Organization to become an instrument for the interests and whims of a few rich and powerful countries.

We reject the attempts to implement concepts that are not clearly defined, such as the responsibility to protect, since such concepts can be easily manipulated to undermine the sacred principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. The current international order, which is unjust and deeply unequal, cannot be succeeded by one that is more primitive and based on a reinterpretation of the Charter and international law.

We must strengthen the leading role of the General Assembly, the only United Nations organ in which there is no place for hegemonies, in which we all have a voice and a vote, and in which the obsolete right to veto does not exist.

We urgently need a reformed Security Council, which acts within the mandate given to it by the Charter, without encroaching, as it is increasingly doing, on the functions and prerogatives of other bodies of the system. The Security Council in its current form does not reflect the reality of today's world, nor does it represent the interests of the Member States. It does not act on behalf of the Member States, which, according to the Charter, it answers to. It is neither democratic nor equitable nor representative. It is therefore unacceptable that the reform of the Council be further ignored. There will not be a true reform of this Organization without a real reform of the Security Council.

In the promotion of better United Nations system-wide coherence, the principle that operational activities must answer first and foremost to the national strategies and development priorities of each country must prevail. The United Nations development agencies in the field cannot engage in activities that are not directly linked to economic and social development, let alone promote conditionality in their work. It is essential that the developing countries' views and priorities prevail in that process as its basic elements, and that cooperative notions and approaches that have nothing to do with the development goals set by the Organization do not.

The political manipulation of human rights, selectivity, partiality and double standards in the imposition of sectarian patterns must cease. We have the sacred duty to protect and promote all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all against the attempt to mutilate, rewrite or reinterpret them, or to adjust them to the unipolar order and hegemonic interests of some.

The new Human Rights Council must embody, in its practice, the principle that human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent. Cuba will oppose any attempt to make the new organ an inquisition tribunal against the countries of the South, ensuring impunity for the flagrant, massive and systematic violations of human rights committed by the most powerful.

We welcome the fact that the report includes a section referring to the special needs of Africa, a continent which is part and parcel of the Cuban people's roots and identity. Africa continues to be marginalized and at the utmost disadvantage in international economic relations. It is simply unacceptable that the current situation should continue, with Africa, having 11 per cent of the world population and the largest natural reserves of the world, contributing 1 per cent of the world gross domestic product and with its participation in international trade being scarcely 2 per cent. The African peoples need no alms; Africa needs resources and concrete actions.

I would like to conclude, as we always do, with a note of hope and optimism. We have very serious challenges ahead, but working together, our possibilities for advancement are infinite. As the Secretary-General states in the conclusion of his report, we need to reduce the gap between rhetoric and reality. The world needs the United Nations more than ever.

Mr. Butagira (Uganda): The Ugandan delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/62/1), and in particular for his references to tables that show our performance in realization of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The picture revealed by these tables shows that we have a long way to go in achieving the MDGs. Because of time constraints, I will be brief in my contribution and simply mention a few areas.

I commend the Secretary-General for making the achievement of the MDGs a central priority for his term in office and, in this regard, emphasizing the special needs of Africa. We appreciate United Kingdom's initiative in proposing a high-level session devoted to the MDGs next year at the United Nations.

There is no doubt at all in my mind that the implementation of the commitments already made at different international forums will go a long way towards achieving the MDGs. The list of these promises is long-ranging, from Monterrey Consensus of 2002 to the promises by the Group of 8 at Gleneagles and more recently in Germany. While most of those who have made pledges are serious about fulfilling their promises, it is our hope that making promises will not turn into a fashionable industry. It is better not to make promises, with their timelines, if they are not going to be fulfilled.

Uganda is on course in its attempt to meet the Millennium Development Goals. We have accomplished universal primary education and have now started on universal secondary education. Poverty levels have been reduced to 38 per cent and safe water coverage is over 70 per cent for urban areas and 60 per cent for rural areas. We have played a leading role in the fight against HIV/AIDS. With more assistance, we are sure that we will accomplish most of the goals by 2015.

As regards the special needs for Africa, the elimination of poverty should be the focus. In many parts of Africa, women with their babies strapped to their backs walk long distances to fetch water and firewood for their domestic needs. Much valuable time is wasted in this effort. They come home tired and in need of rest. Instead of getting rest they spend most of the night fending off marauding mosquitoes. To make things worse, the water they fetch is very often contaminated. Many people travel long distances on foot to reach health centres, and rural electrification is just a dream. How then should these basic problems be addressed? We should move away from rhetoric and lamentations, and towards action. Let us implement, for instance, the quick-impact initiatives as agreed upon at 2005 World Summit.

I would like now to comment on the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa in relation to the special needs for Africa. This office was created mainly to deal with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). However, the special needs for Africa go beyond the narrow mandate of NEPAD and cut across other institutional mandates. Thus there is a need to devise an institutional architecture, including NEPAD, that would adequately address the special needs of Africa. The status quo is definitely not acceptable where it means the overlapping of functions, the scattering of limited resources and inefficiency.

My delegation therefore calls on the Secretary-General, after the necessary consultations with all relevant stakeholders, to come out with an appropriate institutional architecture that would at the same time retain suitable cohabitation with the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa.

With regard to peacekeeping operations in Africa, I had the occasion to tell the Security Council some time back to go beyond its traditional approach of not deploying peacekeepers where, in their view, there is no peace to keep. I repeat my call that Security Council should, in certain circumstances, not only do peacekeeping, but undertake peacemaking as well.

Finally, I turn to climate change. My delegation commends the Secretary-General for spotlighting the challenges of climate change by organizing a high-level event on climate change at United Nations on the eve of the General Assembly. Climate change affects us all and we should work together to respond to the challenges. My delegation regards climate change not only as an environmental issue, but a developmental issue as well. For this reason, my Government is considering mainstreaming the issues of climate change into poverty-reduction strategies. We look forward to a successful outcome of the Bali conference.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): I would like to join the other delegates in congratulating His Excellency Mr. Kerim on his assumption of the presidency.

In the twenty-first century, the United Nations needs to respond swiftly to emerging challenges in the world. The expectations of the citizens of the world for the United Nations are higher than ever. I commend the Secretary-General's determination to reform the United Nations Secretariat to become a more efficient and dynamic organization.

Climate change affects everybody on the planet. The United Nations is best placed to search for an international arrangement acceptable to all stakeholders.

I highly commend the valuable initiative of the Secretary-General in organizing the high-level meeting on climate change on 24 September. It greatly contributed to forging broad political momentum for joint international action.

Japan has proposed a long-term vision for developing innovative technologies and for building a low-carbon society. Japan has also called for an international framework beyond 2012 that includes all major emitters of greenhouse gases. Japan is determined to take a leadership role on the climate-change issue through hosting the Group of 8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit next July.

Another priority area for Japan is African development. For Africa to become a vibrant continent, a continent of hope and opportunity, conflict must be prevented and resolved, and peace must be consolidated. Economic growth must be enhanced and sustained. Secondly, human security needs to be ensured though the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the consolidation of peace and democratic governance. Thirdly, the issues of the environment and climate change must be addressed.

Japan will host the fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) next May in Yokohama. Under the theme of Vibrant Africa, we consider it of utmost importance that through African ownership and a true partnership with international actors, the peace and prosperity of Africa should be achieved. South-South cooperation between Asia and Africa remains a key feature in the TICAD process.

The crisis in Darfur requires the highest attention of the international community. The strong personal engagement of the Secretary-General is highly commendable. Japan welcomes the establishment of the United Nations-African Union mission in Darfur, and looks forward to its early deployment and to progress in the political process. Japan will strengthen its contribution for the consolidation of peace and stability in Africa.

Japan has cooperated for consolidating peace and assisting post-conflict recovery in many parts of the world, including the West Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan, Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Nepal and other places. To build peace, it is essential that the international community ensure a seamless, integrated effort to fulfil tasks ranging from resolving conflicts and providing humanitarian assistance to helping recovery and reconstruction. Serving as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission this year, Japan is resolved to contribute to such international efforts and to make the Commission a forum to bring all actors together to marshal resources and support.

Japan attaches the utmost importance to human security, as one of the pillars of its foreign policy. We would like to see that the human-centred perspective is reflected in the broad areas of United Nations activities. Human dignity and human rights must be universally respected and safeguarded. We sincerely hope for an early resolution of the abduction issue.

It is extremely regrettable that the authorities of Myanmar used force against peaceful demonstrators, which brought about casualties, including the death of a Japanese citizen. Japan calls on the Government of Myanmar to refrain from the use of oppressive force. We hope that the Government of Myanmar will engage in national dialogue, without preconditions, to achieve national reconciliation and promote democratization, while sincerely taking into account the wishes expressed by the people in order to fundamentally and peacefully resolve the situation.

Japan supports the good offices effort made by the Secretary-General and his Special Adviser, Mr. Gambari, in close cooperation with other interested countries, particularly those of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the countries in the region, to promote national reconciliation and democratization in that country.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is another challenge that requires the undivided attention of humankind. From that point of view, we welcome the adoption by the Security Council of a series of consensus resolutions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran and its remaining seized of those cases.

Nuclear disarmament should garner no less attention. As the only country that has suffered nuclear devastation, Japan will submit another draft resolution at this session of the General Assembly to lay out concrete measures towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Counter-terrorism is another important area of international cooperation which is of high priority. Japan welcomes the adoption of Security Council

resolution 1776 (2007). The Japanese Government will make every effort to continue our refuelling activities in the Indian Ocean as a responsible member of the international community.

Japan also supports the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (resolution 60/288). To strengthen the legal framework to counter terrorism, I call upon every State to exercise utmost flexibility for an early conclusion of the negotiations on a draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

Japan believes that for the Security Council to live up to its expected responsibilities, we need to make it more representative and effective. I renew Japan's determination to pursue early reform of the Security Council through an expansion in both the permanent and non-permanent membership. No reform of the United Nations will ever be completed without the reform of the Security Council. All Member States must work together so that we can achieve concrete results during this session through intergovernmental negotiations.

We need to enhance the capacity of the United Nations to deal with new challenges and to deliver more. Japan will constructively engage in efforts to strengthen the ability of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security. Japan also supports the ongoing endeavours to enable the United Nations system to work more coherently and effectively in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance, the environment and human rights. We also need to achieve concrete progress in modernizing management and programmes.

Let me conclude my remarks by renewing Japan's unwavering commitment to making a more effective, better functioning United Nations under the able leadership of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Sen (India): It is indeed a great pleasure to speak at a meeting presided over by you, Sir. I would also like to congratulate the Secretary-General on his first report on the work of the Organization (A/62/1). The report, in clear and concise prose, at least lays out comprehensively the different issues that confront this body. It says that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are achievable. It is marked by a certain optimism. But let me begin with the statistical annex. The statistical annex actually tells a grim story, especially if one looks at it in a disaggregated manner.

Regarding those who are still living on under a dollar a day, we find that while there is some improvement in some areas, for instance in Asia, the position is otherwise either much grimmer — the position is either static or there is only a marginal improvement, and in fact in the Commonwealth of Independent States and in transition economies of South-Eastern Europe, the percentage has actually increased. Again, if we look at the poorest quintile of the population that is living in poverty and look at its share of national consumption, we find again that there is a deterioration almost across the board.

If one looks at the population that is below the minimum dietary energy consumption, again, while there is mostly a position that is static or of marginal improvement, there is also a deterioration in certain areas. And if we look at maternal mortality ratios, the ratio in sub-Saharan Africa is 920 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, compared to a ratio of only 14 in the developed countries. That is a huge gap. If one looks at the incidence of tuberculosis, there is an improvement in Latin America and the Caribbean, and there is an improvement in Asia. But the figures for sub-Saharan Africa and the Commonwealth of Independent States — that is the former Soviet States — show that the incidence of tuberculosis has actually doubled.

Similarly, in the case of access to drinking water, the position is static or one of marginal improvement. If one looks at market access, then indeed the figures do not tell the whole story. For instance, instead of both duty- and quota-free access, only duty-free access is considered. If one looks at duty-free access figures for least developed countries — leaving aside oil and arms — then in fact one finds that market access for least developed countries remains static.

The same is true of tariffs on agricultural goods and textiles, namely, that statistics mask more than they actually reveal. The point is not just what tariffs there are on textiles or agricultural goods. The point, first, is what the tariffs are relative to those that developed countries charge each other, and one finds that the tariffs paid to developed countries by developing countries are almost three times as high. In the case of the United States, for instance, one would be surprised to learn that Angola pays as much as Belgium, to give just one example.

Similarly, since the Uruguay Round the annual loss to sub-Saharan Africa has been $1.2 billion, whereas the gain to developed countries from trade had been $350 billion, according to many economists' calculations. If one calculates the loss incurred by developing countries as a result of trade, one finds that their actual loss is three times what they receive in development aid. Even in the case of agricultural subsidies, the question is not one of tariffs on agricultural goods from developing countries, but rather what comparatively would be the potential for exports from developing countries if there were no agricultural subsidies. That would be the basis for comparison because, according to many economists' calculations, developed countries' agricultural subsidies in fact exceed the income of the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. In dollar terms, even the subsidy for a European cow is $2 per day. Perhaps as a result of all the luxuries, all those cows go mad.

The question, therefore, is how we are to bridge this gap and move towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and, above all, what the United Nations can do. I think that is the most interesting question of all: to examine what in practice the United Nations as a body could do.

Of course, the Secretary-General has also — correctly — brought in the issue of climate change and its adverse impact on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Clearly, there is an ongoing adverse impact that will only accelerate because of the degradation of pastures, land and forests; as well as the fact that children will be taken out of universal primary education to look after the ailing and the elderly, to earn income and to fetch water.

There will also be an impact vis-à-vis gender — because, as we all know, women are far more dependent on the environment, particularly in developing countries. The Permanent Representative of Uganda evoked a very moving image of women with babies tied to their backs trekking miles to look for water, which ultimately turned out to be contaminated. Clearly, it is not those women who are responsible for climate change. Climate change is not created by the poor, it is created by those who run four air conditioners and drive two or three sport utility vehicles. Climate change is the creation of the rich. But, ultimately, it acts with disproportionate intensity on the poor — in terms of storms, the destruction of habitation and vector diseases.

The Secretary-General has, quite correctly, mentioned the commitments that were made: commitments as to official development assistance (ODA) of 0.7 per cent and commitments at Gleneagles regarding aid levels rising by $50 billion by 2010. Unfortunately, the report (A/62/1) does not mention what the delivery on those commitments has been. Actually, if one looks at the figures on delivery, one finds that instead of 0.7 per cent the average ODA is 0.35 per cent, or half. As for the $50 billion, it has been calculated that by 2010 there will be a shortfall of more than 50 per cent — in the order of $30 billion. From where, then, is the extra money going to come for, let us say, climate change adaptation? Even if one looks at the composition of aid from countries that have met the 0.7 per cent target — there are about eight, and we salute them — much of the additionality is for debt and disaster relief, not economic development.

The Secretary-General's report also states that unless we halt AIDS we cannot really win the fight for economic development — or words to that effect, as far as I remember. The report also goes on to say that Africa is a special case and that in Africa deprivation, poverty, disease and civil conflict are preventing economic development and the achievement of the MDGs. But surely the opposite is equally, if not more, true: namely, that we are not able to halt AIDS, deprivation, disease and civil conflict precisely because there is no economic development in Africa. In other words, the truth could be the opposite.

This serves to show that while the MDGs have certainly framed the global debate in very potent terms — and there is no doubt that they constitute a quantifiable vision of human dignity — they are not enough. The MDGs are ultimately palliatives. While one certainly needs palliatives when in acute pain, if the disease is not tackled the pain will surely recur. One therefore cannot really replace development economics with palliative economics completely. Nor can one leave development economics to the Bretton Woods institutions, which are hardly practising it these days.

I therefore think one also has to look at the fact that, as several economists such as Erik Reinert and others have said, in the absence of development economics, the MDGs will be in danger of becoming a kind of welfare colonialism. Instead of the type of

economic development that made developed countries truly developed, Africa is given the antiquated structures of export, mostly of raw material resources. Instead of the economic development that made the developed world free of malaria, Africa is given mosquito nets. Instead of the economic development that enables the debt to be serviced, Africa is given debt cancellation. In short, instead of the equivalent of the Marshall Plan, which industrialized Europe, it is given the equivalent of the Morgenthau plan, which would have de-industrialized Germany. Fortunately for Europe, immediately after the Second World War, the Morgenthau plan was abandoned in favour of the Marshall Plan.

What can the United Nations do? I think the answer is quite clear if one looks also at various conflicts. In Sierra Leone, for instance, there have been successful elections, because the Peacebuilding Commission turned its attention to Sierra Leone. Throughout all the bloody conflicts in that country and elsewhere, between 70 and 80 per cent of the time those countries had been under a programme of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Unless we have the political will to have a reformed Economic and Social Council actually carry out — as Joseph Stiglitz and so many other economists have advocated — a periodic audit of the two Bretton Woods institutions, the IMF and the World Bank, we will not be able to change the fundamental paradigm that comes from them. In addition, the Economic and Social Council needs to have the will to be at the centre of debt restructuring, which has also been suggested by economists. The IMF clearly cannot be at the centre, because it is itself a creditor, and therefore has a vested interest. The IMF concentrates on inflation, because that is of interest to the financial markets. But the International Labour Organization (ILO) deals with employment, which is what the Economic and Social Council is mandated to address.

It might be objected that the Economic and Social Council does not really have enough technical expertise. But we find that an enormous number of posts are being established for all kinds of things that are not of interest to developing countries — to such an extent that even the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions is quite shocked. Surely, expertise can be recruited, and a body of experts can be established that can provide adequate support to the Economic and Social Council to carry out some of those functions.

In addition, in various ways, that is something we would expect in looking at the financial system today. Flowing from the kind of paradigm I have outlined, it is quite normal that the World Bank's *World Development Report* and *Global Economic Prospects Report* would say that the net transfer of financial resources is actually from the developing to the developed world. In 2005 that figure was half a trillion dollars; by 2006 it had reached $650 billion — it had exceeded half a trillion dollars. Even if one includes in the figure the accumulation of reserves — and one certainly can — the picture is not altered, because reserves are invested in low-yielding treasury bonds and assets in a depreciating currency — again, in the developed world.

Therefore, on the one hand, we have a very peculiar inversion of the resource flow. On the other, we have today on the front page of *The Financial Times* the outgoing head of the IMF saying that the result of the current financial crisis is that the shockwaves are going to continue, with far more widespread and acute effects, that we have not seen anything yet. This is the most pathetic confession of the failure of the IMF in terms of surveillance, advice and regulation that one could ever conceive of. It is because we have an economy that finally has taken the shape of what John Maynard Keynes once referred to as the casino economy — an economy based on gambling where there are arcane financial instruments such as derivatives and where distribution is determined by the roulette wheel; hence the enormous problems. In that regard, there is also quite clearly a case for the United Nations to do what I outlined earlier, namely, to play a key role in establishing a financial system that leads to predictable financial flows.

For the developing world to achieve the MDGs, it is not enough to have financial flows. There must also be market access. The Secretary-General's report certainly lays out all that needs to be done in the Doha Round; but how to go about it? It does not say what the United Nations should do to actually accomplish those things.

True, negotiations are taking place in the World Trade Organization (WTO). Things there are in quite a bad way, because, as we all know, the developed

countries are not even saying: we will protect our agriculture and you protect your industry. They are saying: we will continue to protect our agriculture with subsidies and you should not protect your industry. In fact, the developmental round continues to be a market-access round. It is sometimes forgotten that it was developing countries that really did a lot in terms of reducing their tariffs, from the Uruguay Round onward. They also contributed a lot in terms of substantially increasing world trade. There are many developed countries that are now shooting from the trenches and posing as "demandeurs", when in fact they have not reduced their tariffs by a single percentage point since the Uruguay Round.

As for the application of the Swiss linear formula and coefficients, the small and vulnerable economies (SVEs) — and surely here at the United Nations most countries have small and vulnerable economies — would have to reduce their tariffs by 50 per cent more than in the developed countries. In other words, what is linear to the Swiss is life-threatening to the SVEs. Quite clearly, therefore, there is a case for the United Nations to take a role in this area and to make its position known to Geneva, perhaps via the President of the General Assembly or through some other means.

The same is true of the intellectual property rights (IPR) regime vis-à-vis climate change. Some developed countries are proposing that we should go for draconian targets, which may actually prolong unsustainable patterns of production and consumption for a while. But one cannot do that for very long, because those patterns are unsustainable. It is therefore ultimately critical that there be a flow of technology and resources. But the current IPR regime is expressly designed to prevent the flow of technology through the creation of monopolies. How can one have a flow of technology unless, let us say, the United Nations itself thinks in terms of appointing a commission of experts — which, again, has been recommended by many economists, including Stiglitz and others — that can look at how the rewards to innovators can be balanced against the interests of humankind?

On many such issues I think it is not sufficient for us simply to talk in general terms or take a view as a matter of theory or debate. Otherwise we will simply have more reports, rather than changing reality. We will have words, rather than action. We will have text, rather than any kind of context.

Time is very short and I do not want to take up too much of the Assembly's time, so I should now like to refer briefly to peace and security. I think that a lot of good has been done in that regard, but a lot more needs to be done. Nepal is mentioned as a success story in the report; and so it is, up to a point. But it is also very important for the United Nations not to try to expand or prolong the mandate, without the express desire of the Government of Nepal. There must be ownership on the part of the country itself. It is important for the Secretariat to adhere to its mandate, which essentially entails arms management and the holding of timely elections. That is the best way to tackle the problem.

With regard to peacekeeping itself, it is true, as the report says, that the peacekeeping budget has increased hugely. We have done something with regard to the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). But because of the management challenges, I think that it is very important that Member States take an interest and next year actually review very carefully the result of the restructuring. It is important that management challenges are seen to have been successfully overcome.

In the case of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), we have the special Strategic Military Cell, which was established on a purely ad hoc basis on the ground that UNIFIL was a complex operation. But other operations are equally complex: Darfur might turn out to be an even more complex operation. What are we therefore going to do? When we look at the actual facts in the report and elsewhere, we find that the Office of the Military Adviser — which used to be the Military Liaison Office — has been bypassed in the augmentation of resources. The lessons of the special Military Cell have not really been integrated. We are not really moving from the ad hoc to something that is systematic, permanent and enduring. That is quite apart from the fact that the number of staff officers in UNIFIL exceeds the number of staff officers with which Field Marshal Montgomery ran the entire African campaign. I say that simply to show that it is even more important to have some kind of systematic approach, which does not seem to be the case at present.

I think one of the speakers in this debate mentioned a number of antonyms: war and peace — shades of Leo Tolstoy; coercion and cooperation; and terrorism and tolerance. The point is that tolerance may

also turn out to be tolerance of terrorism. I think the real antonym for terrorism is counter-terrorism. In that connection, it is very important that in fashioning a counter-terrorism strategy we should ensure that it is based on the legal instrumentalities that exist and that can be expanded if necessary. The importance of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism is an obvious case in point in that regard.

With regard to disarmament, I think we all agree that for most of us disarmament is key. Disarmament has to be advanced in such a manner that it actually subsumes both arms control and non-proliferation, although non-proliferation, and in particular the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors and others, remains a matter of grave concern. We hope to introduce a proposal, in the context of the current situation, that carries forward Rajiv Ghandi's vision of a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world.

With regard to human rights, I do not want to take up much time. In the context of system-wide coherence, the linkages between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and other United Nations bodies should be consistent with resolution 48/141, which established the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights.

With regard to system-wide coherence, we should, as the report states, struggle to deliver as one. This struggle of delivering as one should become reality, based on the fact that the struggle may not be the best slogan, but the current reality may be even worse. There is a case to be made for a certain independence in the mandates of agencies, for decentralization and pluralism, but that is something I think the Member States will have to discuss. In any case, I do not think that in the funds and agencies, we should sidestep this and try to implement something through the back door without proper discussion in the General Assembly and among Member States and through intergovernmental negotiations.

And finally, on the question of the reform of the United Nations and the revitalization of the General Assembly, I congratulate the former co-chairs, who tried hard and did a good job and who were moving in the direction of taking important political decisions. I do not think the General Assembly can be revitalized through some kind of peripheral, purely mechanical or institutional process, simply dealing with the agenda or how we count words. It has to be truly revitalized by taking important political decisions. Some of the possibilities have been outlined during previous attempts to revitalize it. Without such decisions, I do not think you can create a stable structure within which the Security Council can count on the wide support of the General Assembly.

With regards to the Security Council itself, the report offers an intermediate approach as a compromise, but this intermediate approach has to come at the end of the negotiations. It really cannot come before the negotiations and it cannot shape or prejudge those negotiations. The Open-ended Working Group report is quite clear that there have to be intergovernmental negotiations, which have to produce concrete results in this session, building on what was achieved at the sixty-first session and on the positions and proposals of Member States.

India and many other Member States from the developing world tabled a resolution on 11 September and we have argued for a process of intergovernmental negotiations that would start quickly and have certain elements as their basis. We outlined some of these elements, especially the expansion of permanent and non-permanent seats on the Council, a comprehensive reform of working methods, and increased representative of developing countries, including small and island States, as well as of some developed countries in the context of current world realities. We are also grateful to the many world leaders who have spoken forcefully for comprehensive reform of the United Nations, particularly the expansion of both permanent and non-permanent categories of members.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): On behalf of the Viet Nam delegation, I would like to congratulate you on your election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session. I am confident that under your able leadership this session will meet with success. I thank the Secretary-General for his annual report on the work of the Organization, which dealt with a wide range of important issues, from development, peace and security, human rights, rule of law, humanitarian affairs to United Nations reform.

Seven years have elapsed since the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We note, with satisfaction that, as the Secretary-General reports, progress continues to be made in many areas, especially in poverty reduction. We do, however, share

his concern that progress has been uneven and that the ongoing levels of human deprivation remain staggering. It is alarming, at this halfway point, that several countries are not on track for meeting even a single MDG.

The 2005 World Summit reaffirms that development is a goal within itself and, in its economic, social and environmental aspects, constitutes a key element of the overarching framework of United Nations activities. We cannot agree more with the Secretary-General when he says that achieving the MDGs will benefit all stakeholders — from those caring about and working to improve the livelihood of millions of people still living in poverty to those trying to save the lives of millions of children, from those joining hands to reduce the risk of war and maintain peace in fragile countries to those who, recently, have been trying to convince the world public of the need and the urgency to save our planet.

Based on our own experience, I completely share the Secretary-General's remark that progress on the MDGs is a national priority only where of efforts to achieve them are led and managed nationally. National ownership is the key factor determining the success of development activities at the country level. In this connection, we welcome the Secretary-General's assurance that the United Nations sets a priority on the strengthening of national capacities.

The Secretary-General highlights three important dimensions of United Nations activities related to the implementation of the MDGs, namely, HIV/AIDS, the special needs of Africa and climate change. Like fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic and supporting Africa's development, which for years now have always been high on the United Nations agenda, the struggle to mitigate and adapt to climate change and to achieve the MDG on environmental sustainability deserves Member States' continued backing and, most of all, their unity. Viet Nam pledges to enhance its participation in our common endeavours in these domains.

The past year offered mixed opportunities and challenges for international peace and security. The establishment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur is expected to strengthen the local peacemaking process and, ultimately, end this prolonged crisis. Peacebuilding efforts have also led to initial steps towards building sustainable peace in Burundi and Sierra Leone, consolidating socio-economic reconstruction in Nepal and Timor-Leste and positive developments on the Korean peninsula.

However, armed conflicts and tension continue to escalate in the Middle East, South Asia, the Balkans and Africa and have devastating consequences on the lives of millions of innocent civilians. Peacekeeping operations are placing unprecedented burdens on the United Nations, given the Organization's strained resources. At the same time that we are making substantial progress in implementing the disarmament agenda, the threat of terrorism to international peace, security and development remains a lingering concern.

Viet Nam supports the conclusion of the Secretary-General that struggling peace operations must figure prominently in the work of the United Nations, that we must take steps to overcome the deadlock at the major disarmament forums and that we must move expeditiously to implement the global counter-terrorism strategy adopted by the General Assembly in 2006.

The crucial role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security must be reaffirmed and further strengthened. Viet Nam commends and supports the recent steps taken by the Secretary-General to improve the management of the Organization in the areas of peacekeeping operations and disarmament.

Turning to human rights and humanitarian affairs, if the inauguration of the Human Rights Council in 2006 was an important landmark, the Council's adoption in June 2007 of a package of reforms gives us hope in our efforts to depoliticize the most important United Nations human rights body. Much remains to be done in that connection. Viet Nam will continue to join the efforts of Member States to promote and protect human rights, keeping in mind the principles of objectivity, non-selectivity and respect for national sovereignty.

More than ever, natural disasters are seriously affecting the lives of hundreds of millions of people on Earth. In fact, while I am speaking here tens of millions of people in our region, including my country, are suffering from the consequences of the worst flooding in decades. The report of the Secretary-General states that since mid-2006, weather-related disasters accounted for 85 per cent of all reported

disasters, costing almost 19,000 lives and causing economic damage totalling nearly $30 billion. We welcome the Secretary-General's commitment that the United Nations and its humanitarian partners will assist Governments in preparing for, and responding to, the challenges. Viet Nam is ready to extend our full cooperation.

In order to fulfil its noble mandate in a vastly changed world, the United Nations needs to be strengthened. The success of the United Nations reform process is crucial in bringing about a stronger Organization with a more authoritative General Assembly, a more effective Economic and Social Council, a more transparent and expanded Security Council and a more efficient Secretariat. While noting that little progress has been achieved in that connection, we pledge to continue to work with the Secretary-General and other Member States to ensure the success of the reform process.

As one of the countries implementing a "One United Nations" pilot programme, we hope to continue to receive support from the Secretariat and Member States to ensure success in one of the most courageous experiments in the field of operational activities at the country level.

In another area, my delegation is encouraged by the Secretary-General's intention to strengthen cooperation with regional organizations. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the regional organization of which my country is a member, has been very active, with the recent signing of a memorandum of understanding on cooperation between ASEAN and the United Nations.

In that regard, we appreciate the Secretary-General's recent decision to dispatch his Special Envoy to Myanmar to assist in the process of national reconciliation through dialogue. As a country of the region, Viet Nam follows developments in Myanmar closely and with concern. We expect the parties concerned in that country to exercise restraint and engage dialogue aimed at peacefully resolving their differences and speedily stabilizing the situation through the implementation of the seven-point road map. We expect the United Nations to continue to cooperate with ASEAN in assisting Myanmar to overcome the current situation and restore stability, in the long-term interests of Myanmar and the region.

In conclusion, as we debate the present Secretary-General's first annual report of the on the work of the Organization, let me assure him that Viet Nam will always be with him in his efforts to uphold the solemn duty of the United Nations to pursue the aims enshrined in the Charter.

Mr. Hill (Australia): The debate on this agenda item is an important occasion each year. It gives us, the States Members of the United Nations, a chance to review the work of the Organization against the background of the Secretary-General's report. On behalf of Australia, I want to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/62/1) and to congratulate him on the start he has made in his very important office. We agree with him that more is expected of the United Nations than at any time in the history of the Organization, and that the issues are diverse and complex. It is heartening that, in this globalized world, Member States are recognizing the importance and value of multilateral diplomacy. It is also a credit to the Organization, and in particular to its professional staff, led by the Secretary-General, that it is the body to which Member States so often look to for help in addressing many of the world's contemporary challenges — whether issues of peace and security, development, humanitarian matters, human rights, democracy and governance or, in fact, issues in so many other areas.

But that reinforces the importance of Member States meeting their responsibility to provide the appropriate mandates, adequate funding and political support to the Organization in its work. We, the Member States, have less credibility in demanding a more focused work programme and greater efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of programmes if we are not prepared to take the lead. In that regard, despite committed facilitators, we did not do so well last year in the area of mandate review and system-wide coherence. In fact, the Secretary-General and the Chief Executives Board might be said to be ahead of Member States on reform. In sponsoring on-the-ground pilot programmes, the Organization is certainly ahead in endeavouring to deliver as one, which has obvious efficiency gains. And the Secretariat at least tried to prompt reform on better gender architecture. Of course, the important thing is that as our workload increases, we as an Organization are going to have to become more efficient if we are to meet the important responsibilities entrusted to us.

That leads me to the issue of money. The Secretary-General makes a telling point when he reminds us that the cost of the massively expanded United Nations peacekeeping effort is just one half of 1 per cent of global military expenditures. Nevertheless, the rapidly increasing bill is going to put pressure on the capacity of Member States to pay. Even some of the organizational reforms — which we think are necessary — in the areas of human resources, information and communication technologies, procurement, internal justice and meeting contemporary standards of accountability and transparency are expensive. The refurbishment of capital assets, which is long overdue, adds more pressure.

Having given the Organization credit for efforts towards improved efficiency in delivery of programmes, it still seems to me, in these circumstances, that Member States should request the Organization to do more in finding savings. Those of us familiar with ministerial responsibility in national Governments are well familiar with requirements to offer up savings before bidding for new programmes. While it is not easy, it is a healthy discipline, and one that the United Nations might adopt — or might have to adopt. We always meet our share of financial responsibility and pay on time. But even in Australia, I think it is going to be important that we show that the United Nations is making real efforts to contain costs.

Also relevant to the issue of costs and the capacity of the United Nations to deliver quality programmes is the issue of priority. The United Nations might be clearly in favour, but it is not going to be possible for it to do everything asked of it. Hard choices are going to have to be made. More so than ever, the effort is going to have to be shared with regional organizations and with bilateral partners, whether Governments or civil society.

Not only should we prioritize our workload, but also we should realistically assess who can best deliver the desired outcome and should seek to share the responsibility. Some might see that as defeatist; we would see it as a healthy development in international affairs, actually adding more mass to address the many major challenges we face.

In that regard, we commend the Secretary-General for focusing on big issues and those that genuinely demand mobilization of the global community. We commend efforts to build the capacity of other players who can contribute to better outcomes. In fact, the emphasis in this year's report on turning goals and aspirations into outcomes is commendable in itself. It is something I referred to this time last year (see A/61/PV.24). Through so many commitments, we have given hope. It is now important to achieve results that translate words into better lives for individuals.

In Australia's national statement in the General Assembly last week (see A/62/PV.15), I said that the alleviation of poverty is the most basic responsibility of humanity. In today's world of extraordinary marvels, it should not be so difficult to rid the world of extreme poverty. In fact, most of us know what is necessary. Some have shown how to do it. It is interesting that I follow my colleague from Viet Nam, a country that is showing how to do it.

A little less finger-pointing and a bit more genuine partnership would be a good start. In accepting the importance of good governance, in being prepared to transfer technology, in welcoming capital investment with the security it demands, in supporting health and education programmes and in opening markets with the opportunity for trade, huge progress can be made. Yes, the Millennium Development Goals are important, but they are indicators. What is really important is getting there; we know what is necessary to build more prosperous, just and hopeful societies.

In that regard, we also commend the Secretary-General's focus on democracy. Having Governments genuinely responsible to the people does not solve all problems, but it is a good start. We in Australia have for a long time been encouraging the growth of democracy and good governance as critical to a more peaceful, secure and just world. The picture is amazingly difficult, compared to that which existed even 10 years ago. Despite obvious disappointments from time to time, the trend is heartening.

Finally, I want to refer to two areas that receive mention in the Secretary-General's report and that I think deserve ongoing attention, and they are related. The first is the responsibility to protect. I know that my views and those of my country differ from those of some others who have spoken today. But the 2005 Summit acceptance of the principle that with sovereignty comes responsibility and the abuse by or failure of Governments to protect their own citizens from gross abuse leads to a responsibility of others to take action was, in our view, a historic moment in the

quest for a more civilized world. The difficulty of its implementation should not deter us in our responsibility to protect, and we should work hard on implementation. The veil of sovereignty must not, for example, shield genocide.

Secondly, some States on a downward spiral need help when they might not know it or welcome it. That the United Nations has the capacity to hold out the hand of advice and support is, we believe, very important. Thus, while we have supported the increased peacekeeping and subsequent peacebuilding role — or, for those less concerned about niceties, nation-building role — we also support the increased focus on the Secretary-General's good offices role and the supporting capacity in mediation and preventive diplomacy of the Department of Political Affairs.

In the short time available, I can only obviously touch on a few issues from within the Secretary-General's report, but I think these illustrate the importance of the challenges ahead and the fact that with determination and goodwill we can move from aspiration to achievement.

In closing, on behalf of Australia, I want to thank the Secretary-General, the staff of the United Nations and all those who serve on peacekeeping, humanitarian and other missions, whether as professionals or as volunteers. They are a force for good and we greatly appreciate their commitment.

Mr. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania): The delegation of the United Republic of Tanzania welcomes Mr. Ban Ki-moon's first report as Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, contained in document A/62/1, presented during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly. The report is wide in scope, profound in analysis, with a consistent vision of translating multilateralism into practical, attainable goals. It is indeed an all-encompassing report. At the very outset, we want to pledge our support for and partnership with the Secretary-General in implementing this programme. We hope that our observations and comments will contribute to the realization of his vision.

On the development agenda, the report underscores the intricate and indispensable link between development, on the one hand, and peace and security, on the other, within States and among States and between the developing world and the developed world. The achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally agreed goals provides a moral and practical framework for international cooperation in combating poverty, addressing other forms of human deprivation and saving the environment to make the world prosperous, peaceful and habitable.

At the halfway point in achieving the Goals, sub-Saharan Africa is lagging in overall performance. But several countries have proved capable of attaining some of the Goals, given the right combination of resources, leadership and correct strategies. We must channel resources where they are most required. We welcome the Secretary-General's initiative to launch the Millennium Development Goals Africa Steering Group to mobilize additional resources, as well as the announcement by the General Assembly President of the convening of a special session of the Assembly next year to catalyse world commitments to the timely achievement of the Millennium Goals.

There are some worrying trends on the way to achieving the MDGs which ought to be addressed. First, there is the need to sustain the political commitment to achieving the goals. There are indications that promised resources are declining. That trend could reverse the little progress so far achieved by some countries. The resource flow ought to be sustained. The promise of doubling resources and of meeting the target for development assistance of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product are on the far side of the time scale, between 2010 and 2015, which is going to be too late to make a significant difference.

Secondly, several African countries need to improve capacities for developing their respective national strategies as they strive to implement the Goals. The United Nations has provided support, but the pace needs to be accelerated by augmenting the resources for development. The resources devoted by the United Nations to development, especially human resources, are relatively fewer compared to those resources allocated to other activities, such as peacekeeping and human rights.

It should also be noted that, inasmuch as the time-bound MDGs serve to focus attention and resources on specific development targets, we should not exclude other essential long-term aspects of development, such as investment in physical infrastructure and other productive investments to support and permit public investment aimed at

achievement of the MDGs. We should also heed the danger that the little progress made on MDGs will be reversed, owing to the diversion of resources to remedy or mitigate the adverse consequences of climate change. The challenge of climate change requires additional resources.

We commend the timely initiatives of the Secretary-General to sensitize the world and galvanize political will for urgent action to deal with global warming and climate change. The challenge is one of those issues that can best be addressed by a global response led by the United Nations. The world needs a new global agreement that goes beyond 2012, when the Kyoto Protocol expires. As we prepare for the Bali conference to negotiate a new agreement that may take years to implement and to produce results, we should put remedial mechanisms in place to address the immediate adverse consequences, which are already evident.

In Africa, we are witnessing, in Darfur, the links between environmental degradation and conflict. Several countries are experiencing extreme climate changes, which have brought frequent severe droughts and unexpected food shortages and have affected hydropower supplies. Unprecedented floods have wreaked havoc and destruction on agriculture, land and infrastructure. National capabilities to cope with those natural disasters have proved inadequate. We appreciate the humanitarian response that has followed such disasters, but it has often been too little and too late.

We call upon the Secretary-General and the international community to position disaster response risk-reduction mechanisms in various parts of the continent to predict and cope with climate-change-induced disasters. The United Nations should also work out ways and means to help countries in disaster-prone regions to develop national preparedness capacities to deal with the impact of climate change.

The special needs of Africa, ranging from conflict resolution and peacebuilding to development needs, are adequately reflected in the report of the Secretary-General. The United Nations system has endeavoured to mainstream the special needs of Africa into the activities and programmes of its agencies, funds and programmes — including the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) — especially at the field level. We hope that delivery will be more efficient and effective as we move towards greater coherence and coordination among various United Nations entities.

Coordinated response and delivery in the field with regard to United Nations programmes for Africa demand similar coordination and synergy at the Headquarters level. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa is the appropriate and logical nerve centre to advise and assist the Secretary-General in monitoring and evaluating the multitude of mandated activities on Africa being undertaken in the field by various agencies, funds and programmes. We welcome and encourage the efforts of the Secretary-General to give due regard to strengthening the Office and the profile of the Special Adviser on Africa in a manner that will give him effective and efficient oversight over activities to meet Africa's special needs.

The Secretary-General has come at a time when the United Nations is involved, and expected to assume unprecedented responsibilities, in the area of maintaining international peace and security. We commend the bold and decisive measures taken by the Secretary-General and the Security Council in the area of conflict prevention and peacemaking in Africa — with new initiatives in Chad and the Central African Republic — and to reinvigorate the peace process in Darfur. We encourage the Department of Political Affairs to dedicate more resources to its Mediation Support Unit and to explore more ways in which to work with regional, subregional and civil society initiatives on conflict prevention.

In the area of peacekeeping and peacebuilding, we encourage the search for more innovative ways to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations under Chapter VIII of the Charter. The idea of a hybrid force between the African Union and the United Nations is one such innovative arrangement. There have been other forms of cooperation and coordination between the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council in the area of conflict resolution and management, but there are still many gaps that need to be filled and opportunities that have not been taken advantage of. We are looking forward to the report of the Secretary-General, requested by the Security Council, on specific proposals as to how the United Nations can better support regional organizations under Chapter VIII of the Charter.

We would have liked to comment on every aspect of the report, but time does not permit this. In conclusion, we want to assure the Secretary-General and the General Assembly that Tanzania will continue to participate fully in the deliberations of this body and to render our unqualified support to the Secretary-General.

Mr. Ali (Malaysia): I wish to express the appreciation of the Malaysian delegation to the Secretary-General for his first annual report on the work of the Organization, contained in document A/62/1. The issues and challenges that the world is facing today place a greater demand on the Organization to fulfil its mandate as outlined in the Charter. Therefore, it is imperative that we, the Member States, ensure that that mandate is carried out effectively.

My delegation also wishes to commend the Secretary-General for his initiative to ensure that the United Nations continues to play a central role in the multilateral decision-making process, in the maintenance of international peace and security and in the promotion of international cooperation. In that regard, we note the core task that the Secretary-General set out — making the Organization, including the Secretariat, more effective — in his introductory statement to the Assembly, made earlier this session (see A/62/PV.4).

The Secretary-General's report states that, halfway through the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), progress is uneven. On the other hand, he also states that the Goals are achievable if existing commitments are met. Looking forward, however, we believe that there is greater cause for disquiet than for optimism. That belief is based on the following reasons.

First, the marginal concept in orthodox economic theory holds that, in the initial stages, gains are relatively larger, and progress is therefore more rapid. However, the data in the report show that progress achieved on various MDG targets, even in the initial stages, is too small relative to the targets to be met. For example, in terms of the target "Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger", the prevalence of underweight children under 5 years of age fell from 33 to 27 per cent in developing regions during the period 1990-2005. That is only a 6 per cent reduction within a 15-year timespan, compared to an overall target of 16.5 per cent within a total timespan of 25 years.

Secondly, the data on the prevalence of underweight children under 5 years of age is also interesting, as it shows that there are immense structural and political obstacles that need to be overcome. It indicates that, even when the level of global food production is at an all-time high, the human family as a whole is unable to feed its most vulnerable members.

Thirdly, this lack of progress is occurring at a time when the global economy has uninterruptedly expanded for the past half decade.

Fourthly, despite the announcement that has been made, there is significant room to doubt that existing commitments will be implemented in time to achieve the MDG targets. Given the immense scale of the problems, we are gratified that the Secretary-General has made the achievement of the MDGs one of his top priorities. In commending the Secretary-General, we would also like to point out that what the United Nations needs to do now is to ensure that the current developmental system works better, rather than merely establish new steering groups and bodies.

That said, Malaysia will support the Secretary-General in any way we can. In that regard, Malaysia's United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) country programme document envisages a higher level of cooperation with the United Nations in our South-South cooperation activities. It is for that reason that we are very closely monitoring developments related to the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review and UNDP's strategic plan, as both will have great bearing on United Nations involvement in South-South cooperation activities. Malaysia also remains committed to expanding our South-South cooperation programme, which we are re-tailoring so that the programmes and initiatives offered better meet the needs of the countries involved.

My delegation is concerned at the pace of building a sustainable response to HIV/AIDS over the longer term. We note the work of Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS in assisting countries and helping them to set national targets, develop national capacity to design and implement AIDS plans, ensure the best use of resources and encourage the involvement of civil society and the private sector in this regard. In some way, all that has contributed to the

efforts to achieve the MDG of checking the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015. However, the HIV pandemic is still spreading steadily, and now affects every country in the world. Each year more people die of HIV/AIDS, and the number of people living with HIV continues to rise. That is despite the fact that we have developed means to check its spread. Apart from our efforts thus far to address this problem, my delegation is of the view that more attention should be given to educating people about the disease. Education is the key to achieving the MDG targets on HIV/AIDS.

With regard to climate change, my delegation concurs with the Secretary-General that we are now witnessing unprecedented momentum in efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. We are now more aware of the gravity and urgency of the situation. We must ensure the success of the thirteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which is scheduled to be held in Bali in December of this year. For the Conference to be successful, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities must prevail. We must recognize the fact that the poorest countries of the world have the least capacity to adapt and should therefore be apportioned the least responsibility in mitigating the impact of climate change. Furthermore, ongoing national and regional initiatives to deal with climate change must not compete with, but should instead complement, the negotiations conducted within the United Nations framework.

A post-2012 agreement needs to be built upon the architecture and other fundamentals of the Kyoto Protocol. For example, there should be an absolute emissions reduction target for developed countries, expanded mechanisms that facilitate contributions from developing countries and special provisions for the least developed countries and small island developing States. We know that climate change has implications not only for the environment but also for the global economy. That is an important additional reason why the principle of differentiated responsibilities must apply, so that developing countries can maintain their capacities for sustainable development.

Peace and security is one of the main pillars of the United Nations. We support the central role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as the promotion of a more equitable international political and economic order. The United Nations must continue to shoulder its responsibilities in the maintenance of international peace and security. We take note of the efforts of the Secretary-General to equip the United Nations to be able to face the increasing and demanding challenges in that area.

Malaysia commends the efforts of the United Nations to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its peacekeeping operations. In order to ensure the continued effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, we are of the view that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should be strengthened and adequately staffed, taking into account the principle of equitable geographical representation. The United Nations should also provide the necessary training for peacekeepers to meet the specific needs and varying nature of peacekeeping operations in order to ensure their overall success.

The future development of massive hybrid peacekeeping operations in the Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic opens up a new dimension of a future framework of cooperation between regional organizations and the United Nations in handling peace and security issues. We will closely monitor the effectiveness of that cooperation, which could lay the foundations for future peacekeeping operations.

The key to peace in the Middle East rests on a just settlement of the Palestinian issue. In that connection, Malaysia supports the role of the United Nations to promote a comprehensive and peaceful settlement and the realization of a two-State solution. Real peace can be achieved only if the legitimate rights of Palestinians are recognized and protected. The United Nations must play the role of an honest broker and a protector of all the rights of the Palestinian people.

Malaysia concurs with the Secretary-General's view that the failure and deadlock that has characterized the major forums and instruments in the areas of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation for the past few years have underlined the clear need to revitalize the international disarmament agenda through coordinated efforts, in which the United Nations should play a more effective role. Malaysia reaffirms the important role of the Office for Disarmament Affairs in engaging with Member States, intergovernmental organizations and civil society. It should promote universal participation in multilateral treaties.

My delegation notes that this year we commemorated the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Malaysia hopes that more countries will become parties to the Convention, as well as to other instruments relating to disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in particular the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The accession of India, Pakistan and Israel to the NPT, and the observance by nuclear-weapon States of their obligations under the NPT, would strengthen the nuclear disarmament regime.

The advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, which was issued on 8 July 1996, underlined that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, under strict and effective international control. To date, there are no indications on the part of nuclear-weapon States that they will carry out this obligation. Our goal should be to achieve general and complete disarmament through the multilateral process, of which the primary concern should be nuclear disarmament.

My delegation commends the efforts of the United Nations humanitarian system in strengthening the United Nations humanitarian response to crisis. We recognize that, since 2006, the Central Emergency Response Fund has marked a significant step forward in improving the speed and predictability of funding for humanitarian crises. However, to further improve the humanitarian response of the United Nations, my delegation is of the view that the United Nations policy guidance on humanitarian response should be further strengthened to help the international community deal promptly with emergencies and natural disasters whenever and wherever they occur. The international community should be able to work collaboratively to provide effective mechanisms to mitigate the impact of natural and human-induced disaster and serve as a joint response to disasters and emergencies through considered global, regional and national efforts.

It should also intensify its cooperation to strengthen efforts towards developing a worldwide early warning system for natural and human-induced disasters through, among other things, a multimodal approach, taking into consideration the internationally agreed framework on the strategy for disaster reduction and the operationalization of regional standby arrangements for disaster relief and emergency response. Cooperation should be intensified in the areas of emergency relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction, and prevention and mitigation in the aftermath of disaster. More important, the capacity of disaster-prone countries to handle disaster must be improved and strengthened.

We welcome the Secretary-General's efforts to further strengthen a system of accountability, transparency and efficiency of the Organization. We look forward to receiving further reports relating to these areas in the coming months. Taking into account the process under way and previous experiences as well as the efficiency resulting from the current rules and regulations, we firmly believe that reform is the collective agenda of all Member States that must be dealt with in a realistic manner. All decisions and mandates of the General Assembly should continue to be honoured and respected throughout the process. To make the United Nations a more efficient and effective organization, collective views of Member States are deemed important to ensure predictable resources and timely implementation of all mandated programmes and activities. The Secretary-General and the Secretariat should avoid duplication of resources and should avoid embarking upon proposals that would be detrimental to the work of the Organization.

Our hope for a better, more prosperous and peaceful world remains with the United Nations. For the past six decades, the United Nations has struggled to maintain its role as envisaged in the Charter in spite of the imperfections, shortcomings and constraints imposed upon it by none other than Member States themselves. The United Nations is the beacon for multilateralism that needs to keep burning. It needs to be reformed and restructured according to the times and in keeping with current and future challenges. At this session the General Assembly, under the guidance of its President, should set the pace for the hard work ahead that is required.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): Let me begin by congratulating the Secretary-General on his first annual report on the work of the Organization. In his report, the Secretary-General notes that

> "the Member States and the peoples of the world are asking the United Nations to do more — in more spheres of activity, in more locations, in more challenging circumstances — than at any

point in the Organization's history" (*A/62/1, para. 1*).

This demand by the peoples of the world is evidence of their faith in this Organization, in multilateralism, and in the Organization's ability to live up to its Charter creed, which is

> "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, ... to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom".

We concur with the Secretary-General that in order to deliver results consistently and effectively we shall need the commitment of Member States, as well as reform and reorientation of the Organization. It is for that reason that my delegation, together with the delegations of Sweden, Thailand and Chile, set up the Four Nations Initiative in order to generate, with the assistance of the entire membership of the Organization, a Member State perspective on the United Nations management reforms necessary for the Organization to better meet the challenges before it. We have presented to the President of the General Assembly and to the Secretary-General our report on management reform and trust that it will be found useful as we proceed with our efforts to reform the Organization.

The report of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence (A/61/583) and the report of the Secretary General (A/61/836) on its recommendations, including on reports from the States that are pilot projects for the "delivering-as-one" principle, are helpful in our ongoing engagement on the issue, and my delegation supports all efforts at arriving at consensus regarding the aspect of system-wide coherence.

The reform of the United Nations cannot be limited to the reform of the Secretariat if the Organization is to tackle the challenges before it. That reform must also entail reform of the Security Council. It is for that reason that my delegation, together with other delegations, has insisted upon entering into result-oriented intergovernmental negotiations on the issue of Security Council reform. My delegation is of the view that the Security Council should be expanded in both the permanent and non-permanent categories and that Africa deserves two seats in the permanent category consistent with the African common position as set forth in the consensus.

We agree with the Secretary-General that our priority should be "delivering results on the promise of the Millennium Development Goals" (*A/62/1, para. 6*). Poverty and underdevelopment remain the biggest threats to the progress that has been achieved in attempting to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. We are now halfway towards the target set for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and still some developed nations continue to consistently refuse to fulfil their commitments that would help to improve the lives of the poor.

We have not implemented the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development, thus making it difficult for the majority of developing countries, especially those in Africa, to achieve the MDGs. We must, as States Members of the United Nations, implement the policies and strategies aimed at the achievement of sustainable development. It is important that international institutions, such as the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, embark on the implementation of all the commitments that the international community has made so that the developed countries become true global partners for development with the developing countries and follow through upon their commitments to provide official development assistance and not hide behind conditionalities.

In the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the peoples of the world said, "We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty..." (*resolution 55/2, para. 11*).

My delegation believes and sincerely hopes that we have neither forgotten nor abandoned that lofty commitment, nor abandoned our fellow men, women and children.

We commend the Secretary-General for making climate change a key priority for the Organization, particularly in the light of the fact that overcoming climate change will contribute to the achievement of the MDGs. My delegation, however, wishes to recall

the many programmes and declarations — with clear implementation targets aimed at addressing the challenges of climate change, poverty and underdevelopment — that have already been agreed to by the international community. The efforts of the United Nations should therefore be invested primarily in ensuring the implementation of those programmes, declarations and agreements, among them the Earth Summit, held at Rio de Janeiro; the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation; and the Monterrey Consensus, the agreement of the International Conference on Financing for Development, which included donor commitments to meet the official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product, debt cancellation for the least developed countries and the provision of access to the markets of the developed world for goods and services from the developing world.

It is evident from the Secretary-General's report that, if we fail to seize now the opportunity to address major diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria and HIV/AIDS, the MDGs will not be achieved. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the adoption, at the High-level Meeting on AIDS, held on 2 June 2006, of the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (resolution 60/262), which declared the goal of moving towards universal access to HIV prevention programmes, treatment, care and support by 2010. In fulfilling that commitment, South Africa recently adopted a comprehensive strategic plan for 2007-2011 to deal with HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections. The strategic plan represents South Africa's multisectoral response to the challenge of HIV infection and to the wide-ranging impacts of AIDS.

We are equally aware that, in addition to poverty and underdevelopment, there are other challenges that we must meet through the Organization. The Secretary-General has mentioned his efforts to help address the human rights problem and the humanitarian situation in Darfur, Sudan. We commend him for those efforts and encourage him to remain engaged in finding a solution to the Darfur crisis. My delegation associates itself with the Secretary-General's plea that we must act now to put an end to the suffering of the people of Darfur by bringing together all our resources to establish security, to facilitate a durable political solution, to bring an end to impunity and to meet the people's monumental humanitarian needs. It is for that reason that we have committed our own men and women to the African Mission in the Sudan and that we are committed to providing personnel to the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur.

The violent conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Palestine, Israel, Iraq and Afghanistan and the repression and human rights violations in Myanmar are of grave concern to us. Another unresolved problem is the issue of self-determination for the people of Western Sahara, who continue to cry out for a solution and to look to the Organization to provide one. It is therefore important that the United Nations continue to extol the rule of law as its fundamental principle, to urge States to respect human rights and to endorse the peaceful settlement of disputes. No number of peacekeepers in any territory can ensure durable peace unless and until justice based on law prevails. It is for that reason that we support the ongoing cooperation between the United Nations and the International Criminal Court.

In conclusion, the faith of the peoples of the world has been invested in the Organization. The poor of the world ask themselves: where is the resolve that helped to rebuild European countries after the Second World War? Where is the resolve that helped to put Asian countries on their path to development? This generation, unlike any before it, has the means to defeat poverty and underdevelopment. Let it now manifest the will to do so by implementing the decisions and commitments that it has made before the Organization.

Mr. Bodini (San Marino): I wish to congratulate the Secretary-General on his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization (A/62/1). For two weeks, our heads of State, prime ministers and ministers for foreign affairs spoke about the many challenges confronting all of us and expressed their visions and solutions with regard to world affairs. Now, they have left us all alone in this great Hall to carry out their policies.

If we are to succeed, it is incumbent upon us to make the United Nations in its entirety a more efficient and productive place. In fact, how can we respond to the world's many and increasing challenges if we cannot even revitalize the very core of the United Nations, the General Assembly? How credible is our collective ability to resolve world crises if we are unable, after so many years, to reform the Security Council itself? How can we ask our Secretary-General,

whom we appointed by acclamation, to perform his duties if we continue to micromanage the Secretariat's affairs through the Fifth Committee?

San Marino, like many other countries, does not possess weapons of mass destruction. We do not even possess a small army. Our only hope and defence is a strong, efficient and credible United Nations. Under the leadership of the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General, we want to move forward, without delay, in changing the way in which we do business and make decisions in this Hall. We must expand the Security Council to make more representative. We must enable our Secretary-General to respond in a timely and efficient way to the many world threats confronting us so that the United Nations can fulfil the expectations of our Governments and our peoples.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.